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EVENT#: 171001-3519

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SPECIFIC CRIME: ACTIVE SHOOTER / MURDER

DATE OCCURRED: 10-01-17

TIME OCCURRED: 2208 HOURS

LOCATION OF OCCURRENCE: MANDALAY BAY RESORT AND CASINO  
3950 S. LAS VEGAS BOULEVARD  
LAS VEGAS, NV 89119

CITY OF LAS VEGAS

CLARK COUNTY

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NAME OF PERSON GIVING STATEMENT: SERGEANT JOSHUA BITSKO (JB), P# 6928

DOB:

SOCIAL SECURITY #:

RACE:

SEX:

HEIGHT:

WEIGHT:

HAIR:

EYES:

HOME ADDRESS:

PHONE 1:

WORK ADDRESS:

PHONE 2:

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The following is the transcription of a tape-recorded interview conducted by DETECTIVE J. LEAVITT (JL), P# 5814, LVMPD FORCE INVESTIGATION TEAM, on 10-03-17 at 1834 hours. Also present is Las Vegas Police Managers and Supervisors Association representative T. Roberts (TR).

JL: Operator, this is Detective, ah, Jason Leavitt, P# 5814, with the Force Investigation Team, re- ah, recording one, ah, witness officer interview under event 171001-3519. Ah, person giving the interview will be Joshua Bitsko, that's B-I-T-S-K-O, P# 6928. His call sign at the time was 590K. Ah, his date of hire is [REDACTED] Currently assigned to the K-9 Section. And he has Friday, Saturday, Sunday off, ah, working 1900 to 0500. The interview will - will be reference an active shooter that occurred on October 1, 2017 at approximately 2000 hours. Ah, at 3950 South Las Vegas Boulevard. That will be the Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino. Today's date is 10-03-

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2017 with the time being 1834 hours. The statement's being conducted at, ah, LVMPD Headquarter in building 'C'. We're actually located in the CIRT Office. Also present for this interview will be Attorney Tara Roberts. That's T-A-R-A. Ah, last name, common spelling, with the PMSA. Ah, first off, ah, is it okay if I call you Josh?

JB: Yes, please do.

JL: All right. Ah, first off, Josh, ah, are you aware this conversation's being recorded?

JB: Yes, I am.

JL: Ah, before we get started - um, I realize the event didn't take place today. Ah, but before we get started could you actually, ah, describe to me the uniform that you were wearing and what equipment you would have had on you?

JB: Okay. Well the uniform that I'm wearing is the same one that I'm wearing today. It's a green BDU - BDU style uniform. Um, it's a dark green in color. Ah, K-9 patch and the LMVPD patch. I have a cloth badge patch over my left breast. Over my right breast is my last name. Um, I had, ah - the same duty belt which I'm wearing today. Starting from the centerline moving to the right I have my body cam, ah, battery. My, ah, controller for my E-Collar for my K-9 partner Loki, who was in the car at the time of the incident. I have my, ah, handgun. As I go around to the back I have a flashlight, baton, handcuffs, radio, pepper spray, Taser, extra magazines and on the front I have a, what's known as a traffic lead connected to a, ah - a ring on my belt in case I need to attach my K-9 partner and go hands-free for something. So.

JL: 'Kay.

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JB: But I was not photographed the night of or today so. If you need to do that do it.

JL: We - we should be all right. Um, reference the, ah - the weapon that you're carrying what kind of gun is it you carry?

JB: I carry a, ah, Glock 17 handgun with a Trijicon RMR Optic and an extreme light - light on the front of it. But I also - ah, this night I deployed my, ah, Daniel Defense, ah, AR15.

JL: Okay.

JB: With a, ah, aim point PRO Optic on it.

JL: 'Kay. Ah, do you know if your body worn camera was activated?

JB: It - it was.

JL: Okay.

JB: However, when I - when I, ah, arrived I put on my heavy gear. 'Cause, you know, in K-9 we have SWAT gear which turned the camera towards my face so a lot of it you're gonna get the side of my face like Blair Witch Project.

JL: Um, since you put on your heavy gear can you, ah - do you have any extra equipment on that heavy gear that you also...

((Crosstalk))

JB: I do, so my - ah, my - it's actually a, ah - a plate carrier, ah, the brand is 511. It's OD green as well. I have, ah, a large yellow police patch on the front. I believe I have a police patch on the back along with my last name and K-9 on the back. Um, I have a

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couple extra magazines. Um, for my AR15 on the vest. A couple of pouches for miscellaneous K-9 equipment on it also.

JL: 'Kay. Ah, reference the, ah - the active shooter that we're actually here to talk about. Ah, can you just describe to me and start with, um, where you're at at the time that you learned about this incident.

JB: Mm-hm.

JL: Ah and how you responded and if you just - would just kind of go through what took place after that.

JB: Yes. So, at - we were doing - ah, conducting new dog training and I have a couple of new dogs, I'm our training sergeant so I run our training program. We were at Eastern and 215 at Moon Valley Nursey which is a stage for our new dog training. Um, I keep my Pac-set on scan so I hear every channel. Um, I don't necessarily always hear what's going on on every channel but I look for - look for Code Red tones. Um, screaming on the radio. And that's when I heard - I heard an officer screaming, I looked down, I saw that it was on Convention Center. I turned it to, ah, Convention Center so I get all the traffic on it 'cause how scan functions it's just the channel you're on you'll get all traffic and the sporadic other channels. So when I switched over I heard somebody, ah - an officer yelling on the radio something about casualties, something about, ah, shots being fired. Ah, the rest of my - my team was dressed down in their black tee-shirts and - and cargo pa- or BDU pants for dog training. But Dave Newton, ah, who is one of my handlers, officers, ah, was with me.

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in uniform. So I said, "Let's go." I yelled to the other guys, "There's an active shooter on Convention Center." We jumped in our car and went. We jumped on 215 headed westbound. Um, exited Las Vegas Boulevard. Driving time, it was probably only a couple minutes before we were there. We began heading north on Las Vegas Boulevard from, ah - from 215. Or did we go? No, I'm sorry, so we got on I- we got on 215 went 215 to I-15, I-15 to Russell. Ah, eastbound on Russell, northbound on Las Vegas Boulevard. As we were going northbound I, ah, was advised that the suspect was firing from an elevated position Mandalay Bay. So that's about the time limit from when it first started where I'm guessing for a start from what I heard, driving time to when they started to figure out the shots weren't coming from the interior of Route 91 but they were coming from, ah, Mandalay Bay at a elevated position. We still didn't know where, what floor. Um, I get - we have K-9 Simplex radios in our car so I can communicate to coordinate searches upon our arrival. I get on the K-9 Simplex radio and I tell Newton, "Don't drive down," because we were gonna drive right underneath it. There was a conglomeration of patrol cars on Las Vegas Boulevard. Initially I did have a concern that there were officers taking a lot of fire there 'cause they were right in the line of fire. Um, we did a U-turn, Officer Newton said, "I'm gonna go in on the Four Seasons," it should all be captured on my body cam. That radio channel is Simplex line of sight so it's not recorded. Um, we enter through, ah, Four Seasons, we go over to the Shark Reef. When I can get on the radio - I start to crisis dress, I throw on my heavy gear, I throw on my helmet. Um, when we - I get on the radio and I say - first thing I said, "I need a couple of officers at

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the Shark Reef so we can make entry to Mandalay Bay." Um, so I asked for officers. She acknowledges me - I was never assigned to the call so I want to just make sure that you guys, my body cam is tagged because I was never assigned to the call so it's not automatically gonna be tagged. So if you guys can sure - 'cause I don't want it to be deleted in 30 days. Um, so, Newton and I begin our crisis dress in our SWAT gear. Um, we get a couple of PD off- or PD detectives that were sitting at South Central arrived with us. Um, the - as they - they pull up some of them already have some of their gear on. "Like gear up. We're gonna make entry here." I ask, "Does anybody have a rifle," they say, "No." So then I deploy my rifle - rifle. Generally as a, ah - a sergeant, a supervisor, I don't want to have my rifle out. But given that we were going into rifle fire and nobody had one I deployed mine. I also carry a ballistic shield understanding that a ballistic shield that we carry is only rated for handguns, um, which I've been certified through LVMPD SWAT to, you know, carry and operate the shield - I understand that there's a new shield class out and I haven't taken that yet. Um, but I have been through SWAT school, operated with the shield numerous occasions. Um, so I - I also deploy the shield which I - I give off to the PD detective. Um, it's better to have it than not. So at that point, yeah, I knew we were going into rifle fire but at the same I - I'd rather carry it and have it. Um, right before we're getting ready to go in two more PD detectives shows up, I don't know who. A female officer, she had a rifle. I'll tell you through my training and experience she appeared to be very overwhelmed. Um, which is why I still even though I had somebody with a rifle on my team kept my rifle. Um, and then another PD detective with me so then at

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this point I have, ah. Is that one, two, three, four, five - a five man element and myself. So we make entry. Um, initially Officer Newton, ah, he's a K-9 handler, gets his K-9 partner out. I told him to put the K-9 up. Reason I did that is we were going into a gunfight possibly a very - got a lot of people running towards us. Um, later in the event and I'll explain that it would have been nice to have a patrol dog with me, however, running through a crowded casino with people running and screaming were gonna elicit bite. Um, I would rather him be able to put shots on the suspect rather than worry about his dog. Um, also I operated with, ah - with Officer Newton on numerous different occasions so I - I knew his capabilities and I'd rather it be unencumbered by his patrol, ah, K-9. We made entry through the Shark Reef, it was a bit of jaunt 'cause that's a lit- that's a long walk from, I don't know if you're familiar, I'm sure you are now quite familiar. But, ah, through those doors it was quite a walk especially in heavy gear. So we're kind of trotting, I didn't - I intentionally paced ourselves 'cause I didn't want to be going into a gunfight smoked. Ah, 'cause I did know actually I was at the Shark Reef that weekend with my family before so I knew how long of a walk it was. Ah, through the casino. So we, ah, you know, pace ourselves. I'm telling citizens to go towards us 'cause I knew there were no gunfire coming from where we were coming from so as we come across citizens we'd tell 'em to go towards us. Um, one of the PD detectives with the shield, and you have to forgive me, I don't know his name. Um, asked an employee where the - the elevators to the, um - the elevators to the hotel, the tower is and he - they told him just straight and to the right. But as we go into the main casino I take our team left to security. I

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found a security guard. I took one of my PD detectives. I said, "You with the security guard go up to, ah, surveillance so we can get intelligence." Um, he - one of the other, um, detectives, "You want me to go with him?" And I did want him to have two people but I knew I was going into a gunfight. Um, so my perception was I needed as many bodies with me going up. 'Cause I didn't any other officers in there at this time. Ah, so I did direct that PD detective to go with security guard up by himself. Um, I wasn't hearing gunshots on the casino floor. Obviously it was a possibility to - and it was, you know, not the best situation to have him by himself going up. I made that decision. I knew - I knew the decision I was making when I made it. Um, I took my team to the elevators, Officer Murray, ah, a K-9 handler with me had gotten on the radio and advised, ah, Mandalay Bay or to kill the - kill the elevators. So you had to have someone with a card. Ah, tactically was an outstanding decision 'cause if the suspect did get mobile it would be able to inhibit - we can own, I can own the stairways, I - we don't have the resources to own every floor of the elevators. So, um, that decision - if the suspect were to go mobile prevented him from moving. It did create some, ah, you know, difficulties in moving at times. Um, but in my opinion it was worth that to stop the suspect if he was mobile. The information that I was receiving at that time was there was security and a gunfight on the 29th floor with the suspect. And then also there was patrol officers stating that the suspect was possibly on the 32nd floor. As I get on the elevator, um, Sergeant Matchko and his team also get on the elevator. So we're all in - in the elevator. We - we make the decision to go up to the 28th floor. And then take the stairs up. So I don't want to open the



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doors to taking rounds. 'Cause the information I was getting at this point comms, our radio also was horrible. Every time I'd get on the radio or not every time but I'd say probably every fourth time I'd get double beeps, it wasn't working inside the casino. When it was I was hearing the ca- they were dealing with the casualties outside. Um, the people down, getting medical. Um, so trying to get in between, get the information, it was extremely difficult. So, I communicated with Matchko. I can't remember, I - I remember saying, "We'll take floor 29." I think I sent him to floor 30 or I might have asked him to go to 32, I'm not - I would have to review the body cam. Um, I watched the body cam the day of with, um - with, ah, the - I wanted there to be real time information to the detectives and the people in the CP so I did plug in my body cam at South Central Area Command and played it to see how much of the room we can see 'cause we're still working this, right, so, um. Or I needed real time information. So I did, I watched part of it but I didn't watch the whole thing. Um, so we go to floor 28, my team gets off we go to the stairwell. We go up to 29 and we begin clearing. Um, I took the lead or the - the team leader position, I went to the left. Ah, because I had a rifle. Um, I had given off - my female officer that had the rifle stayed with Matchko's team just 'cause how it worked out. So then I had two PD detectives. Ah, Officer Newton and myself. Um, so I was the only rifle. I was the team leader off to the left with the rifle. Then I had a officer with the shield and then handguns behind that. I, ah, made Officer Newton our rear guard and I'll explain why that was such an important position in a second as we go through. And then I had, ah, first entry, second entry and then I would either take entry of the front if we

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needed to as we moved through the, ah - as we moved through the floors. On the 29th floor - so you had, basically it was like a - you had three wings on each floor going off in different directions almost like a triangle. Um, so we - it was just kind of a pick a direction at this point. Um, we begin clearing down the hallway the rear guard behind us. We came across, I think it was 29th floor, I - I can't say for sure. A couple open doors. Um, rooms that we just went in and cleared, there were people inside. We sheltered in place. You know, there's someone shooting inside lock the doors. So then as we come out because there was three I would make the call left or right and I would direct our rear guard, "Hey, this person could - if they came out could swing behind us." Um, obviously I'm not seeing security in a gunfight on 29. But comms were so bad that I made a decision instead of going straight to 32 I was concerned that we were going to, um - that if we - if I skipped a floor and there was someone on 30 they'd come up behind us. And I didn't want to fight a - a gunfight in two directions especially with the limited manpower, limited communications. So we go up to floor - I think the next floor 30 I come out and as we go - I come I believe it was Matchko's team, ah, we just come face-to-face. I immediately diagnose it as cops, I'm like, "Metro, Metro, Metro," or whatever I said. I duck into cover. Um, I then advise them, "Finish clearing here go up to 32. We'll do the next level and then we'll meet you." Um, so we did that. They went up to 32. Ah, we cleared 31, nothing of info on any of those. Other at one point because I'm on the SWAT communicator for the all-call my phone kept fricking ringing. Um, giving up my position. So I did take one of my - one of my people I put him in the leader position, I falled back or fell back

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so then I could turn my ringer off 'cause tactically I didn't want my phone ringing the whole time, um. So we get up to floor 32 I'm standing in the hall well. As we go up - as we're going up to, ah - on the stairwell I hear something above me. Um, because communications were so bad especially in a concrete field stairwells with all the metal stairs I couldn't get on the radio, I couldn't rely on the radio to - to give our position which is what I would rather do. Um, I took a chance at that point that the people above me - I could hear mumbling. Um, I could hear people but - so before I ran to the corner it didn't sound like a suspect. Not the - I can't really explain would a suspect would sound like but I'll tell you through my training and experience I felt it might be officers. Instead of getting on the radio which I obviously prefer to do I just began yelling, "Metro, Metro, Metro," waiting for a response. They did respond I don't remember what they responded but obviously it was enough suffice for me to come up. I came up on the next level there was three security guards holding Berretta's and two Convention Center officers with them. Um, I directed them to hold their position there. And then we continued out to floor 32. Before I went into the floors though I stopped. Because I had so many incidences of blue on blue I'm on the radio trying to find out where they are on 32 let 'em know where we're at. And let 'em know that we're coming out so I don't get shot. 'Cause I - you know, they might see a rifle. Obviously I'm not wearing a tan uniform I'm wearing green, greens. I'm aware of that so trying to get an answer on the radio. Trying to get an answer on the radio, I'm not, I'm not. I think eventually I said, "Okay, let's open the door," I open the door and it was Levi, ah, in SWAT and his team coming towards us. So, ah, because

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myself and Newton had been through SWAT school I been on 100's of SWAT mis-missions with Levi he goes, "Great, you guys - you two are with me." He had a plan at that point. We dropped down a floor, went and we went up the stairwell to there - so basically how I said there was three wings. The one wing to the north where, ah, I think believe it was 135 where the suspect's room is. Right outside to - so if you're facing the door to the left is the stairwell door. Um, we go up in the hallway. We, ah - we kill the lights, there's two lights we pry open to - to shut the lights off. Um, we might have fallen a couple times 'cause we had to boost some people up to get there. I mean it wasn't pretty but we got it done. Um, but we didn't want to ba- be backlit when we opened the door. Um, it appeared that the suspect had drilled the door shut. Someone said security did it but that doesn't make sense. Ah, it appeared the suspect had drilled the door shut. We pry- we popped the door. Um, I'm up now, it's me, Newton. There's - so basically you have stairwells that go down, I'm just gonna draw you a little diagram here. Um, and you have a little landing. Then you have a door and then a second door that goes out to the hallway. Targets - ah, target's door right here. So you had a second - you got a landing here and then you got a second little room here. Um, you had - in this second room that led directly to the hallway you had Newton Levi, ah, and myself. Um...

TR: Josh, can I stop you for a minute?

JB: Yes.

TR: Will you just explain your diagram kind of in terms of north, south, whatever, for the recording.

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JB: Okay, well as of actually right now I - I poorly, I believe north is gonna be to the left of the, ah, diagram. And I have a hallway...

JL: You should be right.

JB: I have a, huh?

JL: I think that's right.

JB: Yeah, so, um, but I have the hallway that runs north, south and then east, west is the stairwell that we were at. There was a little retaining room. There's two doors there. Ah, we tried to pin the doors open at one point we - I tried to use a tactical muzzle that I keep in my pocket. Um, that didn't work. Um, but - so we used a, ah, pry bar to pop open the door. Ah, patrol officer, I think it might be a gang officer that was with - him and Levi popped the door open as I - if I provide cover, um, with my rifle. Once we get the door open directly across from us there's a second, there's a door directly fro- across from us the door faced. Well if that way is north then the door would face west. Um, there's a door and in front of that door is what appears to be a room service cart. On the room service cart on top there's a plate with, I didn't know what it was at the time. Ah, a black - ah, what it turned out to be a camera taped on top of it and that camera was on top of the plate facing back towards the suspect door. Um, I couldn't see at this point underneath the, um, cart but there were wires go- leading to the cart. Um, so I covered on that door 'cause that's obviously suspicious. Um, we start talking and it - and - I can't say how long we were there. I can't say everything we discussed at this point. We're discussing tactics, discussing what's

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that cart. Um, there were - there was a lot of debris on the ground outside consistent with rounds flying through the door. Um, down the hallway. Um, and I believe I - I might have peeked the door and actually saw the bullet holes for myself. That lent to me that the suspect was most likely still inside the room. But at this point on the radio I'm getting a, another active shooter at New York New York and an active shooter at Tropicana. Officers yelling on the radio that there's multiple casualties at these locations. You know, I expect phone calls to come in from citizens here. 'Cause you have people walking in injured. But when I heard officers yelling, "There's multiple casualties, multiple casualties," to me that upped my clock of how long we have here. First off it took a while to get up here. This wasn't a normal active shooter where someone's going through a crowd and you go and neutralize 'em. This is a subject in a hardened heightened position. So I knew how long. I was very aware that he was actively killing people. Um, so Levi when with all these others going on he says, "I have a couple charges," um, which to me - you know, charges meaning you can do an explosive breach on a door to make entry. Um, and I - I can't remember the exact wording but he's like, "I'm thinking we hang a charge," um, and see if we can't get a response from the guy. So I'm like, "I'm good with it." Um, I step out. Officer Newton covers the door as Levi hangs the charge. I step out, I cover that secondary door, ah, with my rifle. And I believe it was at this time, I can't be 100% certain if it was at this time or another time. That I reached over and I flipped that plate that had the camera on it so it wasn't aimed at us. 'Cause I knew we're gonna - I felt we were probably gonna make entry and I wanted to give us

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every chance. Um, so we - we tuck back in. He then calls Lieutenant Huddler on the phone to get approval for the [REDACTED] Um, and, you know, I think he got approval for tagging the charges prior but I can't - I can't remember. And I'm like, "Hey, we need to let the officers down the hall know. We need to get on the radio and make sure they know. They don't hear an explosion and think we're all dead and start rushing down the hallway." Um, so - so we get on, we let them know that, "Hey, we're gonna - we're gonna breach the door." Um, so we tuck back in, we use the shield to prop the door open. 'Cause if I shut the door the explosion may damage it, it may, whatever, so we use the shield to prop the door open. We step back, um, he calls for the breach. We breach the door, we get a successful breach. Ah, we move forward. Now Levi is low and I'm high. And Levi's seeing how much he can clear we're still behind somewhat cover. Um, we weren't definitely not in a fatal funnel at this point 'cause we weren't out in the hallway. We were - still had the wall as cover. I could see a, ah - ah, what appeared to be an AR platform rifle with a Scope and bipod, ah, directly behind the door. I called that out to Levi, um, as he's clearing what he can clear just from his location. Ah, we move out into the hallway. We get Officer O'Donnell and another SWAT officer I believe and we make entry. Once again my perception is if we didn't make entry we wouldn't know, 'A', if he's still inside. Um, or if he's still gonna kill people. I mean he's be- at this point I'm starting to hear the gravity of this, so. Um, I'm not blind to the fact that there was a chance that there was explosives on that cart. That was one of my main concerns. We make entry. Um, and initially when we made entry or we started I could see that this

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wasn't a secondary room that that was a hallway that would lead to that door. So I held on that door 'cause I didn't want a suspect to come behind us. I hear Levi calling for one, meaning, you know, he's - with me, "I need one, I need one." For me that means he needs help in there so I grab somebody I said, "You cover this door." And I fold into the - or move into the room. Um, I end up going left clearing a bedroom and a closet. Um, stepping over numerous weapons, brass, debris both from him shooting a lot of guns, debris from us blowing the door. Um, I could see what appeared to be a blue ventilation system. Um, when I could feel airflow which wasn't natural for that room. I been in the - I've been in that specific - not that specific suite but that type of suite for dignitary protection as a bomb dog handler at Mandalay Bay. So I was - but, one, I didn't think about it before. If I did I probably would have (unintelligible) layout. Um, I was a little stressed at the time before we made entry. Once we went in I remember, "Oh, I been in - I've been in these places." Um, so there was the, ah - um, ventilation system. Which we stepped over, I might have stepped on to be honest with you. I tried to be as careful as at that point though it's still tactical. Um, we clear the bedroom. Ah, O'Donnell opens a door, I clear a closet. We then move out and there's a closed bedroom door, ah, on the east side of the room. And that - the door faces, ah, like the room when you turn the south. And it was closed. I wasn't in a position necessarily where I could see it. I - I'm know- I've learned not to rush in, you know. He'll call me if he needs me at this point. But he ha- if he needed more bodies at that point he'd call more - call for more. Um, he says that he's gonna do secondary breach on that door rather than open and go in.



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So good tactical call. Um, I also at this point see the suspect laying supine, his face fa- his feet facing north, um, he's on his back. Um, he has a, what appears to be a devastating gunshot wound to the head. Ah, there's a small silver revolver above his head with blood on it. Everything was consistent to a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Ah, it appeared as though like I said he had taken his own life. Ah, there was not blood rushing out. It - there was - it was a pool of blood which led me to believe it wasn't like he did it as we made entry. I'm guessing it would, you know - I mean I can't - I'm not even gonna say a time. Ah, 'cause I don't have the body experience to say a time but there was not blood rushing out that I saw. Ah, Levi called for a secondary breach or ca- called that he was breaching. He breached that door again, he said it on the radio so we didn't have people rushing in thinking that, you know, we had just got blown up which was still a concern of mine that we were gonna get blown up because I knew through my training and experience that these types of tactics he booby-traps it as well. Um, went in cleared the bedroom and at that point we're done. We, ah - there was - you know, there was no other suspects inside. There - I believe the SWAT commander asked, "Hey, can you get the guy's wallet and identify him," which we needed to identify if this was our guy, if that's who the room's registered to, and all that. So we did. Ah, we also, in the bedroom there was a folder we opened and found checks, that's how we got the female's name and the address. Um, minimal, we just were going for Intel. That could save people's lives. Once we had it, okay, we backed out. Um, I - other things I saw in the room there was - there was cards. I don't think the wallet was on the suspect. I think the wallet

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was on a counter. Um, I'm pretty sure but I'm not 100% sure. I mean obviously Levi would know where he got the wallet from. Um, there was bags full of magazines, I mean you've been in the room or at least seen pictures so you know there was far too many weapons. There was like 20 rifles, 20-something rifles. Ah, we were stepping over guns left and right. Um, all looked, appeared to be brand new. Um, and different calibers from what I can tell. I'm not a gun expert but it appeared to be not all just .223's. Ah, there was broken windows. I can't say how many. I saw at least two broken windows in the room. Um, so we stepped back out in the hallway. We all kind of just take a deep breath. And then we know, hey, we got to go back to work. So we just discuss we're gonna go down. We're gonna regroup. And we'll go back to a deployment point from there. So and I think I talked to some of the officers that were with me that went in the room with us. "Hey, good job." You know, so.

JL: 'Kay. I want to, ah - I've just got a couple of follow-up questions so I want to back up a little bit. Um, when you're coming up the stairwell and you get to 32 right?

JB: Mm-hm.

JL: And you ta- did you did your, ah, diagram, you talked about like there's basically two doors.

JB: Mm-hm.

JL: To - where the stairwell is.

JB: Correct.

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JL: You got the first door kind of a little room and then the door that goes into the hallway. Um, can you kind of explain a little bit? You talked about the - the door that was drilled shut. Um, did you see - could you see anything from your side that maybe where you knew what you were dealing with or is that something you kind of really saw after the fact?

JB: No, so - well first off, so when we are there I take Officer Donaldson, um, and I put him behind us to cover high. 'Cause once again I didn't want someone coming down from higher back on our back. Um, same thing I'm just trying to - as much command and control of it as I can keep in such a dynamic and rapidly evolving situation, um, I - once Levi was there I knew that he could handle more tactical and I could back off a little bit from tactical 'cause I have tactical experience but - and when - when it was just me and the PD guys and my guy I had to dictate tactics. Once Levi was there and I've worked with Levi for years and years. I been to SWAT school with Levi so I knew he can manage tactics while I can now kind of back off and - and start being a little more, "Hey, I need a patrol guy here. We don't need so many people at the stairwell with us. We need the," and work that. Um, as far as the door somebody said - oh, it was - it was screwed shut by security. I don't remember seeing. I remember why won't this open? It's the only one I came across that wouldn't open when we were going. So that's - I made the - I jumped to the conclusion that the suspect did that to maybe slow our, ah, approach. Um, so someone had a handheld and they just they pried it and pulled it open. But I can't speak to - I - I think I remember something up high with two screws but I - I can't speak to it.

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JL: That's fine. As this is going on, ah, are you still hearing gunshots? Are - are you hearing anything like that?

JB: The only gunshots I heard is when I was on the Boulevard. Once we get up there, um - you know, 'cause I started on the 29th floor and worked up. I - I did not - I was not hearing gunshots anymore.

JL: But even though you're not hearing gunshots are you still getting some radio traffic to hearing that there's still things actively happening outside?

JB: Oh, 100%. We were - I was getting reports of other active shooters and I was get- of other locations on the Strip. And I believe I was hearing that he was still shooting. I just - you know, if I'm on the south side of the 29th floor I may not hear it. Is - is secure as everything is. Compar- so I didn't take that as this was done by any means. Um, I just - when we got up to the 30- where I think I would hear gunshots I wasn't hearing 'em anymore.

JL: As you guys are, um - when you first open that door you talk about the cart that you saw something on top that you later learned was a camera. Ah, when you first see that, um - I guess my question would be did you see the wires, did you know there was something weird about it?

JB: Hundred- I saw the wires. I will tell you when we made that decision to move forward it was one of those we had to. Um, I worked a bomb dog for years. I - I like to think I know a det cord and other things look and these were extension cords. Um, I made

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a gamble that they were cameras. I can't sit here and say it was 100% and I can't tell you that I didn't know if we were gonna get blown up. So.

JL: You all right?

JB: Yeah.

JL: Um, you guys decide to, ah - you're gonna go out you're gonna do things. Did you know that there was officers at the other end of the hall?

JB: Yes, in fact at one point when we, ah - before we move I tell Levi, "Hey, we need to get on the radio and let the officers at the end of the hall know to move back." Because I didn't want a crossfire situation. I didn't want guns aimed at us when we moved and then when I did move out to cover that, ah - the - the door and move the camera I could see the officers at the end of the hall. But we were in communication with them. At one point comms were so bad another officer said, "I'll call Matchko and let him know," and that officer called Sergeant Matchko on the phone and advised him what the plan was so he knew. Because, ah, we just it - I was getting either a double beep from my radio, meaning it wasn't transmitting. Or I was, ah - couldn't co- I couldn't get on because people were talking about, you know, people shot and down and hurt and moving people. You know, to me and this is just more of a - I know people are out there dying but, you know, we need to stop it. Can't stop plugging the - plugging the dam without stopping the - you know, stopping the water first so.

JL: Um, I don't have any other questions. Do you have any questions?

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TR: I do, I just had a point of clarification. You said that Levi told you that he had a couple of charges. And he made a call to the lieutenant. Did the lieutenant actually make the call to use the charges or did you make that call?

JB: Well, it wasn't like he - he gave the plan, I said, "Okay." But we can't use explosive breaching without the SWAT commander's approval.

TR: Okay.

JB: The SWAT commander (unintelligible) so. It's like, you know, the - so we had to - we couldn't get on the radio to do it so he called him on the phone.

TR: Okay. And when you said, "Okay," what was your state of mind at that point?

JB: Yeah, we got to do it. That's the safest way to do it. I didn't want to stand in front of the door and kick it. I'd rather open the door from cover and then we can see it.

TR: And at what point were you made aware that you guys had the only suspect? That there were no additional active shooters?

JB: I still don't know today that there wasn't any additional active shooters. There was no - no more in the room. But if I thought that was the only suspect and he wasn't actively shooting I damn well would have like to wait for an entire SWAT team up there to make entry. But I didn't know that which is part of my mindset as to why we had to go in when we did.

TR: Okay. I don't have anything further.

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JL: 'Kay. Um, the only other thing I was gonna ask, Josh, is if you could maybe, ah, on your little diagram that you've done.

JB: Mm-hm.

JL: Draw where the door is or write door kind of.

JB: Yeah.

JL: 'Cause I'd like to make a copy of that for you and me as well. Just so we kind of know what those are.

JB: Yeah, I'll - I'll do the whole thing for you. And you can just take this piece of paper.

JL: Okay.

JB: I just write this stuff down so it looks like I'm paying attention.

JL: And I don't know that there's a need to keep recording on this. We might possibly have a question...

JB: I'm...

JL: ...from this but.

JB: I'm good at with you shutting it off.

JL: Okay, I'll go ahead...

JB: If you need to turn it back on you can turn it back on.

JL: No, I'll go ahead and end the interview. Ah, same persons are present, time is now 1906 hours.

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JL: (NET TRANSCRIPTS)  
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